

## Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 OES-06 DLOS-06 EB-07 AID-05 /088 W

----- 086825

R 111323Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7660

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT OPENS

1. THE MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT OPENED ON AUGUST 10 WITH ONLY A FEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED ON THE FIRST DAY. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE RAJYA SABHA PASSED THE TERRITORIAL WATERS, CONTINENTAL SHELF, EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE AND OTHER MARITIME ZONES BILL (SEPTEL).

2. IN THE LOK SABHA, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW AND JUSTICE SYED MUHAMMED SUPPLIED MEMBERS WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S MUSTIFICATION FOR PLACING 64 STATE AND CENTRAL LAWS ON THE NINTH SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION DURING THE PREVIOUS SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. AMONG THE LAWS REMOVED FROM THE JURISDICTION OF THE COURTS BY THIS ACTION WERE VARIOUS STATE LAND REFORM MEASURES, THE URBAN LAND CEILING ACT, THE BONDED LABOUR SYSTEM (ABOLITION) ACT, AND THE PREVENTION OF PUBLICATION OF OBJECTIONABLE MATTER ACT. SYED MUHAMMED SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN ESSENTIAL TO TAKE THIS ACTION IN ORDER TO UPLIFT

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THE WEAKER SECTIONS OF SOCIETY "EVEN IF IT INCIDENTALLY

AFFECTS A FEW CITIZENS' RIGHTS." (NOTE: MOST OF THE LEGISLATION PLACED ON THE NINTH SCHEDULE DEALT WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC MATTERS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE 20-POINT PROGRAM. THE PREVENTION OF PUBLICATION OF OBJECTIONABLE MATTER ACT EFFECTIVELY INSTITUTIONALIZES PRESS CENSORSHIP. END NOTE.)

3. IN AN UNUSUAL MOVE, SEVERAL CPI MP'S RAISED A "CALL-ATTENTION MOTION" IN THE LOK SABHA TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. FINANCE MINISTER SUBRAMANIAM REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT AND WAS TAKING ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO BRING PRICES UNDER CONTROL BY SUCH METHODS AS CRACKING DOWN ON HOARDERS AND SPECULATORS. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A CALL-ATTENTION MOTION HAD BEEN RAISED IN PARLIAMENT SINCE THE EMERGENCY.

4. IN OTHER BUSINESS, HOME MINISTER REDDY INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE LOK SABHA TO EXTEND BY ANOTHER TWELVE MONTHS (I.E., UNTIL JUNE 25, 1977) THE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT TO DETAIN A PERSON UNDER MISA WITHOUT DIVULGING THE GROUNDS FOR HIS DETENTION. THE BILL, WHICH REPLACES AN ORDINANCE ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT ON JUNE 16 (NEW DELHI 8962), MET WITH RESISTANCE FROM OPPOSITION MP'S, PARTICULARLY FROM THE CPI AND CP(M). ACCORDING TO AN ACCOUNT IN THE PRO-CPI HINDI DAILY JANYUG, CPI MP S.M. BANERJEE STRONGLY ATTACKED THE MISUSE OF MISA BY THE POLICE AND BUREAUCRACY. HE CLAIMED THAT 20 CPI WORKERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN BIHAR UNDER MISA AND DEMANDED THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AMONG THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED DURING THE THREE TO FOUR WEEK MONSOON SESSION ARE: SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS TO SEVERAL MINISTRIES, BILLS REPLACING SEVEN ORDINANCES PROMULGATED BY THE PRESIDENT SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, AN AMENDMENT OF THE PENAL CODE, A BILL TO DELIMITATE (I.E., REDISTRICKT) CONSTITUENCIES FOLLOWING THE 1971 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENSUS, A BILL TO TIGHTEN PROVISIONS OF THE DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT, AND A BILL TO RAISE THE MINIMUM MARRIAGE AGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED BY PARLIAMENT, HOWEVER, WILL BE THE PACKAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS FORMULATED BY THE SWARAN SINGH COMMITTEE (SEPTEL). THE SESSION WILL END IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER. SAXBE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, MEETING REPORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** vogelfj  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NEWDE11794  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760309-0691  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 115  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** vogelfj  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 09 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT OPENS  
**TAGS:** PINT, IN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006